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P.Lund 4.13.1-2

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## P.Lund 4.13.1-2

When the bird and the book disagree,  
always believe the bird<sup>15</sup>

Attention was redirected to the first two lines of this piece by Klaas Worp's note in *BASP* 51 (2014) 198. For easy access to the image I recommend proceeding through APIS into the Lund collection and entering the number 27. As confirmed by my attempt on 13 May 2015, this will bring up a link to *Pap. Choix* 25 (with image), one of the Lund papyrus's subsequent editions; the other is *SB* 6.9349.<sup>16</sup>

The papyrus is a petition about a theft of wheat and bread. Its addressee is anonymous; his titles only are recorded in the first two lines, the second of which has for seventy years resisted satisfactory decipherment. Combining the accepted reading of the first line with Worp's revision of the second yields the following:

τῷ τὴν στατιῶνα ἔχον-  
τι κώμ(ης) ὑποβ(ενε)φ(ικιαρίῳ)

“To the head of the village police station, *subbeneficiarius* ...”

While this moves in the right direction, it remains, I believe, both flawed and incomplete.

The flaw resides in the introduction of a new word, ὑποβ(ενε)φ(ικιαρίῳ), a Greco-Latin compound representing the Latin *subbeneficiarius*. As so often, *unicum ergo suspectum*. Worp considered the letters υπο to be “damaged but not problematical.” And in fact the *omicron*, an ink blob without hollow, is acceptable as read; the right half of *pi* is clear in its horizontal and right vertical strokes, but the preceding letter, though abraded and out of alignment (it is low and to the left – the papyrus is distorted here), is more likely *alpha* than *upsilon*. Preserved of the letter's left side, as I see it, are traces of an acute angle, roughly ∟. This is sealed off at the right by a broken reverse oblique stroke (\\). The results look something like ∟\\. Compare, conveniently, the *alpha* at the start of line 3. If alpha is the correct interpretation of these remains, the reading

<sup>15</sup> Saying attributed to naturalist John James Audubon (1785-1851). My thanks to Todd Hickey and Dominic Rathbone for their careful reading and comments on two previous but different versions of this note. I alone am directly responsible for the results.

<sup>16</sup> Pl. VII in the *ed.pr.*

becomes: ἀπὸ β(ενε)φ(ικιαρίων),<sup>17</sup> i.e., *ex-beneficiarius*, a title amply attested, though almost exclusively in fourth-century papyri.<sup>18</sup>

Worp's revision, by the way, tacitly introduces a *mu* into κώμ(ης) that is not found in previous transcriptions, in this way reinforcing interpretation of this complex of letters as referring to a village. Here, I believe, is where the revision is incomplete. Presumably (this is not stated), Worp is interpreting the horizontal stroke over *kappa-omega* as a devolved *mu*. The *mu* would make the resolution κώμ(ης) incontestable. Initial resolution of this complex as κώ(μης)<sup>19</sup> surely influenced attempts to see in the following traces a village name, Ἰβ(ιώνος) (Εἰκοσιπενταρούρων) (*BL* 3.105, 6.74; *Pap.Choix* 25) or Νᾶρ(μούθεως) (*P.Rain.Cent.*, pp. 102-103; *BL* 8.205), both of which, but especially the latter, are palaeographically untenable.

In any case, now that thanks to Worp's initiative every letter in line 2 has been accounted for, a village name can no longer find mention there, but it is worth noting that the reported theft is alleged to have taken place in the village of Narmouthis, line 13. In that line will be found a third and final abbreviation in the papyrus as it survives.<sup>20</sup> There, as the writer approached the right edge of the papyrus, he realized he had run out of space to write out Ναρμούθεως to the very last letter, so he abbreviated the village name with a flat stroke over *omega*. This suggests that if the writer had intended κώμ(ης) or κώ(μης) in line 2, he would have written a stroke only over the *omega*.<sup>21</sup> The mark of abbreviation,

<sup>17</sup> *Beta* and *phi* are partly obscured by the loss of a strip of horizontal fibers, which explains D. Foraboschi's construing *phi* as *psi*: *P.Rain.Cent.*, pp. 102-103. But compare the *phi* in φανερόν, line 22, where the expected circular or ovate component is drawn thick and flat in two shoulder-to-shoulder horizontal strokes, perhaps over an erasure.

<sup>18</sup> I count 20 hits on the DDbDP (accessed 30 March 2015), all but one belonging to the fourth century. The exception, *SB* 6.9157.7 (III AD?), in a list of names, some obviously Christian, is perhaps dated too early. *P.Ryl.* 4.657.14 (AD 323-324) should likely be added to the list of attestations. It currently reads: Ἀμμώνιος ὁλο β(ενε)φ(ικιάριος), the editor apparently contemplating a much-damaged patronymic. This should probably be corrected to: Ἀμμώνιος ἀπὸ β(ενε)φ(ικιαρίων). The papyrus is deep dark owing to dampness. *Alpha* is hard to see; *pi* looks possible; *omicron* is certain. (My thanks to Roberta Mazza for images of this detail.)

References to the simple title βενεφικιάριος are thick in both third and fourth centuries: S. Daris, *Il lessico latino nel Greco d'Egitto*<sup>2</sup> (Barcelona 1991) 33-34 s.v.

<sup>19</sup> With a question mark in the *ed.pr.*, carried over into *SB* 6.9349 and *Pap.Choix* 25; no question mark at *P.Rain.Cent.*, p. 102 (*BL* 8.205).

<sup>20</sup> The bottom of the petition is lost.

<sup>21</sup> I owe this insight to Todd Hickey (email, 2 April 2015). One may also suggest – a minor and contestable point – that the resolution κώμ(ης) or κώ(μης) with no village name following should have been marked by the definite article if it were to mean what

[illegible]

however, is a single horizontal stroke written dead straight; it hovers not just above *omega* but, written from left to right, fully covers *kappa* as well, starting exactly above its hasta. In this writer's slow, deliberate hand, this cannot have been by chance.<sup>22</sup> In brief, the ensemble, drawn so carefully, is κ(υρί)ψ, a contracted abbreviation of κύριος in the dative, written in imitation of a *nomen sacrum* and intended as a sign of respect to the addressee, despite his secular position and the petition's secular contents.<sup>23</sup> I suggest here that the clarity of the drafting trumps the consequent, unprecedented word string and the rare application of contracted forms of κύριος to humans of whatever rank.<sup>24</sup> If all this is right, the previously contested reading of lines 1-2 becomes:

τῷ τὴν στατιῶνα ἔχον-  
τι κ(υρί)ψ ἀπὸ β(ενε)φ(ικιαρίων)<sup>25</sup>

and means:

“To the lord in charge of the police station, ex-*beneficiarius* ...”

or (better):

“To the head of the police station, sir, ex-*beneficiarius* ...”

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it is taken to mean in the APIS translation: “To the head of the police station of the village ...” (my stress).

<sup>22</sup> “The writer uses a predominantly book hand and avoids ligature except with sigma (l. 1). Letters are small and heavy and only rarely of cursive shape ...”: C. H. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands 350 B.C. – A.D. 400* (Oxford 1955) 23 (with pl. 23b on the facing page).

<sup>23</sup> This is a convoluted way of expressing Paap's oxymoronic “non-sacral” use of the *nomen sacrum*: A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.* (Leiden 1959), *passim*.

<sup>24</sup> Evidence in the documentary papyri is sketchy and scattered. The best example for present purposes is *P.Strasb.* 1.35.v.1 (IV/V A.D.): ἐπίδ(ος) σὺν θ(εῶ) τῷ κ(υρί)ψ N.N. Other examples I have found are *P.Oxy.* 12.1592.3 (III/IV AD; vocative case, religious context); *SB* 6.9139.1 (restored) and 16 (both vocatives) (VI AD?); *SB* 26.16687.13 (IV AD; partly restored, accusative case); *P.Vars.* 32.9 (AD 618? Dative of indirect object; an apt parallel but very late).

<sup>25</sup> The following blank space, previously unreported, is presumably one of punctuation, to separate the person petitioned from the one petitioning. It is treated as a lacuna in *SB* 6.9349.2. There is another blank before the date begins to be recorded in line 8, less easily explained as punctuation.